

THE
Ministry of the Letter
VINDICATED
FROM THE
Charge of *Anti-Christianism.*
OR AN
ANSWER
TO

Mr. WOOLSTON'S Four Free-
Gifts to the CLERGY, and
Challenges on this Question,

Whether the Hireling Priests of this Age,
who are all Ministers of the Letter, be
not Worshipers of the Apocalyptical
Beast, and Ministers of Anti-Christ?

*— Dicisque facisque quod ipse
Non sani esse hominis, non sanus juret Orestes.*

By a COUNTRY CURATE.

L O N D O N :

Printed for A. MOORE, near St. Paul's,
MDCCXXIV.

THE

Ministry of the Interior

VINDICATED

FROM THE

Charge of Anti-Slavery

OR

AN SWER

TO

Mr. W. L. Garrison

Editor of the Liberator

Charges on the 12th

Whether the Hibernian

who are all Ministers

not Ministers of the Gospel

State and Ministers

By the

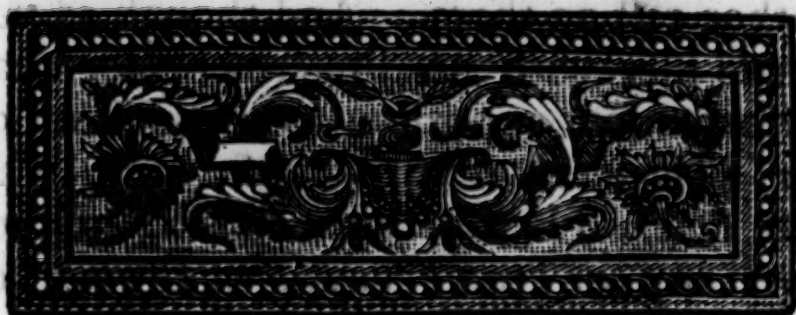
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By a

JOHN

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Street



THE
Ministry of the Letter
 VINDICATED
 FROM THE
 Charge of *Anti-Christianism.*

S I R,



Am the same *Country Curate*, who publish'd that notable *Answer* to *Aristobulus's* Two Letters to *Dr. Bennet*; in which I fully vindicated the Learning and Orthodoxy of the *Clergy* of the Church of
 B *England,*

England from those foul Aspersions that Author cast on them. And though as yet I have met with no Preferment for that Performance, according to the Custom of our *Bishops* to reward those most who have deserv'd best of our Church; neither have any of those eminent *Divines* of high Station, such as Bishop *Hoadly*, Dean *Frankland*, Dr. *Bennet*, and others, whom I made honourable Mention of, so much as thank'd me for my Pains; yet I don't doubt but they think of me, and, when I shall have done a little better Service to the Church and *Clergy*, will express their Gratitude, and make suitable Returns for it.

It is well known, I stopp'd the Mouth of *Aristobulus*, who, since that satyrical *Answer* I sent him, has not dared to appear in Print. If he is not convinc'd of his Errors, which may be question'd of such a *Bigot* as he is to the Authority and Opinions of the Fathers, yet the Sharpness of my Pen, and the Acuteness of my Wit has so scar'd him, that he has not look'd me in the Face since; and I believe he will never write more in Defence of the *Quakers*, or of the Allegorical Interpretation of the Scriptures.

And I did not think that any one else would have had the Hardiness to take up
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the *Cudgels*, and espouse his Quarrel. But you, *Sir*, it seems, whether of his Party or not, is best known to your self, are so Bold and Fearless, as to venture a Battel in a Cause, not very foreign to *that* of *Aristobulus*: And to that Purpose you have publish'd your repeated *Challenges* to the *Clergy*, upon a *Question* most provoking in Terms; and like a *Gigantick* Champion, you defy the Armies of the *Ministers* of the *Letter* to engage you on it. But notwithstanding the Bigness of your Looks and Talk, I doubt not but to lay you on your Back, and put you to Silence, as I have *Aristobulus*, who was as confident of his Strength, and of the Goodness of his Cause, as you can be.

Had you, *Sir*, taken my Answer to *Aristobulus* into serious Consideration, you might have discern'd that I am a Match for you too. In that Answer, short as it was, you might have beheld, as *ex Pede Herculem*, my Abilities and Capacity to fight you at your own Weapons. Nay, that *Answer* by way of Anticipation, might have serv'd as a good one to your *Free-Gifts* or *Challenges*, and have prevented raising any more Dust against the *Ministry* of the *Letter*, which I had before vindicated. But you, it seems, without taking any Notice of that my *Answer*,

as if it had not been a strenuous and serious one, are for proceeding afresh in a Cause that is already vanquish'd. Just as our stubborn and cross-grain'd Dissenters will be repeating their Objections to the Excellency of the Constitution of our Church, without regarding the Solutions and Replies that our Clergy have as often made to them: So you wilfully overlooking my Answer to *Aristobulus*, where your Reasons for the *Ministry* of the *Spirit* are sufficiently, though briefly, touch'd on, are for continuing the War with us, hoping your Writings may fall into the Hands of some People who are Strangers to mine, and who, to the Perversion of their Protestant Faith, and Corruption of their Principles, may be captivated by your Reasons and Authorities. But this is the foulest Play in Controversy that can be; and is a sign of an inveterate Enemy to Truth, or at least of an incorrigible *Bigot* to Opinions, which without Controul, he'll go on in the Defence and Propagation of.

After you had publish'd one or two *Free-Gifts*, and was sensible how unacceptable an Undertaking you was engaged in, I thought you would have desisted; and have troubled neither your self, nor the World any more with your obso-

obsolete Notions out of the Fathers, which the Preachers of the Protestant Churches have long since abandon'd, and are now averse to the Revival of them; especially, after I privately admonish'd you, upon your Second *Free-Gift*, to give over your Undertaking, or I would make such an Example of you for Impertinence and Incurability, as the like had not been heard of: But you would hearken to no Reproof; but write and ride on, in your own Conceit, like a *Conqueror*, trampling upon our *Clergy*, and *Ministry*, as if no Stop could be put to your Career and Conquests.

A Man then of such Obstinacy and Perverseness, as you are, is no longer to be born with. And it is an Argument, as all sincere *Protestants* will judge, of the Goodness of the Nature of our *Clergy*, and of my self in Particular, that we kept our Pens and Hands off you thus long. Consequently if I fall on you now with somewhat the more Severity, I shall be justified for it before all Men, who are Lovers of our Order, Function and Ministry: And if I should happen to treat the Fathers with some Disrespect; nay, if I should despise their Authority, and scoff at their Traditions, it's you, who have
made

made an ill Use of their Writings, and not I, that will be to blame for it.

Rivet ^a and *Dallee* ^b, Two good *Protestant* Writers, tell us, that it was the *Perverseness* and *Stubbornness* of the *Papists*, in the Use of the Fathers, in Controversy, that made them write, the *one* against the Authority, and the *other* of the Uselessness of their Writings: And very good Reason had they for so doing; for since the *Papists* were so refractory and incorrigible, as to be always pelting the poor *Protestants* with their Testimonies out of the Fathers, (as it was confess'd they had the Advantage of the *Protestants* in the Use of them, in many Points,) was it not wisely done of *Rivet* and *Dallee*, to strike at the Root of that Argument, and invalidate their Authority? If the *Protestants* had allow'd of the Authority of the Fathers, they must, as *Rivet* owns, have acknowledg'd them-

^a *Inviti facimus, & non nisi Adversariorum Importunitate & Procacitate adaçti, ut in Patribus Errores & nexos animadvertentes, eos detegamus. De Autorit. Patrum, c. 9.*

^b *The Stubbornness and Perverseness of some Men in adhering to the Fathers, constraineth me to lay aside some of that Respect that is due to Antiquity, and hath obliged me to give a Sight of the Errors of the Fathers. Of the Use of Fathers, Book II. Chap. 4.*

selves *Hereticks* ; or, as *Campion* ^c the *Jesuit* says, if the *Protestants* would admit of the Testimonies of the Fathers, there would be soon an End of the War between them, and Victory must be granted to the *Catholicks*. But hold, Mr. *Campion*, the *Protestants* were not such *Fools* and *Cowards* as to yield at that *Rate* ; but, like wise and courageous Warriors, have set aside the Army of the Testimonies of the Fathers, as the improper *Auxiliaries* of the *Papists*, and so made Room for Battel, Disputation and Controversy without End.

And as it was the Perverseness of the *Papists* in the Use of the Fathers, that made *Rivet* and *Dallee* to write furiously against their Authority ; for without such Provocation they both declare, they would not have done it ; neither would a *French Protestant Synod*, as *Dallee* says, have condemn'd the Use of the Fathers in Controversy with the *Papists*, if they had not seen a Necessity for it. So it is your Contumacy, *Sir*, and Stubbornness, that is the Cause of whatever Reflections I shall cast upon the Fathers, to the

^c Ad Patres si quando licebit accedere, confectum est Bellum, tam sunt nostri, &c. *Ratio Quinta.*

Degradation of their Authority, and Diminution of their Honour. It is well known, that the *Clergy* of the Church of *England* have hitherto had a Veneration for the Fathers, and would have continued it, if you, by a bad Use of them, had not alienated our Hearts from them: Therefore if I treat their Writings sometimes with such Language, as is unbecoming of dutiful Children towards their Parents, remember it is your *Perverseness*, that is the Cause of it.

I suppose, you will call your *Perverseness* by the Name of *Zeal* for the Authority of the Fathers; and perhaps you may compare it to the *Zeal* of *Elias*, for the Spirituality of the Law of his God, who otherwise could not be taken up into the Heaven of the Sublime Sense of the Law, in a Chariot of Light and of Fire; for the one, according to your Reasoning, is a Consequence of the other: And I know you have Christen'd the *Stubbornness* and *Contumacy* of the *Papists*, by the Names of laudable *Veneration*, and filial *Duty* to the Precepts of the Fathers: But we have more Wit than to let such bad *Faults* go by such good *Names*; and I hope more Grace than to call Virtue *Vice*, and Vice *Virtue*; which would bring us under the woful Denunciation of the Prophet

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phet against those who put Darknes for Light, and Evil for Good.

You have not, *Sir*, as yet, done much Mischief by your Writings, nor perverted any, as I hear, from the Protestant Faith: But if you should be suffer'd to go on without Animadversions, who knows what the Consequence may be, especially if the *Laity*, for I have no Dread upon me about the *Clergy*, should once have a Taste of your Learning? It is fit therefore to reprimand you in Time, and

Venienti occurrere Morbo,

to apply an Antidote before-hand to that Disease you would spread the Infection of; and I wish this might be done without Corrosives, and sharp Prescriptions against the Authority of the Fathers.

I wish, I say, I could do this without severe Reflections on the Fathers; but it can't be: For the Authority of the Fathers, whom we would willingly love, has already done a great deal of Mischief in the Church, I will not say to Christianity it self, reserving that *Topick* for another Opportunity, but to our Holy *Protestant* Religion. It has not only obstructed the Conversion of the *Papists*, and stopp'd the Progress of the Reformation; but has

occasion'd the Return of many *Protestants* to the Catholick Church, which without Grief of Heart, I can't think, and speak of. Mr. *Chillingworth*, the famous Author of *The Religion of Protestants*, &c. says, one Reason of his turning *Papist*, was ^a *Because the Doctrine of the Church of Rome was conformable, and the Doctrine of Protestants contrary to the Doctrine of the Fathers, even by the Confession of Protestants themselves.* And though this Reason, which he has not deny'd the Truth of, could not keep him in the Church of *Rome*, for he left her for some Reason or other; yet others have been unhappily perverted and retain'd in her Communion by it: And what's worse, many *Clergymen* of the Church of *England* at this Day, who are *Dabblers* in the Fathers, are leaning to some *Popish*, or, what you, *Sir*, will call, *Primitive Doctrines*; and was it not for their being suspected of Disaffection to the Protestant Interest, or for fear of falling under the Censure of our Bishops, who are a goodly Set of *Protestant* ones, they would more openly declare for them.

^a See his Preface to the Author of *Charity maintain'd*.

But there is no Mischief that can accrue to our Reform'd Churches from the Fathers, like that, which you, Sir, with your Primitive Invectives against *Preaching for Hire*, and the *Ministry of the Letter*, would bring upon them. If you should succeed in your Design, or if we should grant the Validity of your Testimonies, which you have and can more amply produce against us, what will become of our *Protestant Hireling Priesthood*, and of the *Popish* too, notwithstanding your favourable Touches on it? Your Principles, if irresistibly urg'd, will not only bring an indelible Mark of Infamy and Disgrace upon us for *Heresy* and *Apostacy*; but will turn us a Grazing with *Nebuchadnezzar*. Work we can't, and to Beg we are asham'd. But that's not the worst on't; the good People, who have had us in Admiration for our pretended Learning and Orthodoxy, will laugh us to Scorn, and so much the more, as they have been deluded and deceiv'd by a false Opinion of us.

This Consideration fires me with Rage and Indignation; and is enough to set a *Blockhead* as well as a *Coward* to write and fight. My *Brethren* of the City, whom you, Sir, in your last *Free-Gift*, have egregiously abused for K — s as

well as D——s, may use their Discretion, and bear with you as long as they see fit. I am of Opinion, that they, if they would exert themselves, want no more of Learning to oppose you, than I do. And I hope the good Citizens, their daily Auditors and Admirers will impute it to their Christian Patience and Forbearance, and to that Goodness of Nature, which you want, that they hold their Pens off you. But I can no longer keep my Temper. My Blood boils within me. And though I may not be so equal for the Battel, as some of our dignified *ones* are, yet I am resolv'd to have a *Brush* with you. Such a *Hectoring Bully* and *Blusterer*, as you are, was never heard of in the Polemical *Stage* of Christian Theology, and that too, in the midst of a Croud of choice *Swordsmen* and *Penmen*, the Clergy of the City. They may do well, for ought I know, to pity and despise you; and are in the right on't, perhaps to raise and spread ridiculous and contemptible Reports of you: But I am afraid, lest the Laugh of the Populace should some time or other turn against us for *Comards*; and therefore I am bent on't, in due Time to venture a Fall with you. If you should happen to worst me at the several Arguments and Weapons I shall fight you
I with;

with ; it will be the less Trouble and Grief to me, if I shall thereby animate and provoke another more expert Swordsman of our Order, to espouse my Quarrel, and to be aveng'd on you.

I will not arraign, I say again, the Wisdom and Prudence of our most learn'd *Clergy* of the City, for their keeping Silence and their Tempers so long ; but, without submitting my Judgment to theirs, I think it high Time with Satyr, and Sharpness of Wit and Reason, to Slice and Chastise you. If you are suffer'd to go on without Contradiction a little longer, I hear you will charge us with Impudence to Preach or Print any more in our present way, or to fight any other Battel in the Field of Controversy, 'till the War with you is commenc'd and decided ; and then with the more *Shame* shall we take up the Quarrel and Dispute, which to our *Blame* we have hitherto neglected. This therefore is a sufficient Justification of me, till another, and, if possible, a better Penman does engage with you. And though I am conscious of my own *Tenuity*, (a Word, that for Form-sake I use, according to the Mode of our greatest Authors, in Preface to their most learn'd Works,) in Comparison of many of my *Brethren*, yet I don't question, but to
give

give you a good Drubbing with my Pen; and notwithstanding your mighty Boasts in your Third *Free-Gift*, wrest your *Herculean Club*, as you call it, out of your Hands.

This, I say, I will do, notwithstanding you talk as big as *Hercules* with your fatal *Club*. The *Roman Catholics*, indeed, compare the Authority of the Fathers to *Hercules's Club*, wherewith they pretend to bruise the Heads of the *Hydra* of the *Protestant Heresy*, which, in Truth, consists of many Sects, like so many malignant Heads of an *Hydra*, that are always hissing, and spitting their Venom at each other. And I must own that the *Jesuits*, and other Papistical *Writers* have, with that their *Club*, a little batter'd, and would much more have maul'd our *Hydra* of Protestantism, if the *Lutherans* and *Calvinists*, being well fronted with the hardest *Corinthian Brass*, had not bravely stood the Brunt, and, by their Contempt of the Authority of the Fathers, happily maintain'd their Ground. What will be *Elias's Club*, if he should come, like a re-

* Scibunt ex Jesuitis nonnulli Testimonium Patrum esse veram Herculis Clavam, qua prostrantur Hydræ multorum Capitum, id est, Hæreses variæ. *Rivet de Authorit. Patrum*, c. 8.

generate and Evangelical *Hercules*, to quell the Monster of *Anti-Christ* or *Busiris* of Contention in the Church, we know not: If it should happen to be the *Authority of the Fathers*, or an *Allegorical Branch* of the Tree of the Oracles of God, we can't help it. We hope he'll not fall upon us with it, but, after he has given the Apocalyptical *Beast* his deadly Wound, will transform it into an *Olive Branch*,

Ramumque Manu prætendet Olive,

and portend Peace to Mankind, without any Injury or Disreputation to our *English Clergy*. In the mean Time, I'll not suffer such a *Stripling* as you are, to pretend to this Mystical *Club* of our Apocalyptical *Hercules*, which you are no more able to wield, than I am *Guy* of *Warwick's* Sword. I will wrest it out of your Hands, and clear the Stage of you. Whereupon setting you at Defiance, and bidding you stand upon your Guard, I come now, without parrying any longer, to a close Fight and Engagement with you.

I shall not at present disturb you, nor the Fathers, in your fond Notion about *Anti-Christ*, exhibited in your *Third Free-Gift*; as how *Anti-Christ*, will go by the Name of Christ, and be no other than a
false

false Christ, made so by Erroneous and Heretical Notions about Christ. This Opinion, I say, I leave you and the Fathers to enjoy, and please your selves with it. Not that I grant the Truth of it, having more Objections against it than you are aware of, and which, upon another Occasion, may possibly be produced against you. You may as well be of the Opinion of Philo^f *Judeus*, who look'd upon the whole Story of making and worshipping the *Golden-Calf* in the Wilderness, but as an Ænigma or Parable, and that the *Calf* it self was but a Figure of an erroneous Opinion, by which God was made like an irrational and nonsensical Creature: Or you may as well espouse the Doctrine of the *g Therapists* of *Egypt*, who compared the whole Law of *Moses* to an Animal, whose Flesh was the Letter, and whose Soul was the Spiritual Sense of it: Either of these Opinions is as tenable and probable, as your Primitive and obsolete Notion about the Apocalyp-

^f Ορα τον μορον και τους χορευς· α δε δια πυλων ανι-
τεται, παρρασητομεν, &c. In Lib. de Temulent.

^g Απατα γαρ η νομοθεσια δοκει τοις ανδρασι τυλοις
εοικεναι ζωω, και σωμα μεν εχει τας ρηλας διαλαξεις,
ψυχην δε την εναποκειμενον ταις λεξεσιν αορατον νουν.
Philo. in Lib. de Vit. Contemplat.

ptical *Beast* or *Anti-Christ*. But supposing that this your Opinion about *Anti Christ*, which we *Ministers* of the *Letter* are irreconcileably averse to, should unexpectedly prove true ; then I must own, *all Nations do worship the Beast*, and will, as *St. John* says, *wonder after him* ; that is, be strangely surprized and astonish'd at their Error, if you ever give them a clear *Idea* and intellectual *Vision* of it.

Neither will I now contend for our good *Protestant* Opinion of the *Pope's* being *Anti-Christ* : Not, that I give up this Opinion ; for I have more to say for it than you can imagine ; and if ever there be a greater Occasion than I see at present, you shall find me to urge it lustily against you. And however, you may *Ridicule* and make a *Fest* of this our *Protestant* Opinion of the *Pope's* being *Anti-Christ* ; yet you must allow it was a lucky Thought of our *Ancestors*, by which the Reformation of our Church was carry'd on to a great Extent. And for ought I know, no better Cause can be assign'd, why the Progress of the Protestant Religion has stopp'd for an Age past, than that our Preachers, as usual, have not thunder'd against the Anti-Christian *Pope* from the Pulpit. For what Reason our *Divines* have left off that good old Cu-

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stom,

flom, I know not. I hope it is not because they are wavering in *that*, which was a prime Article of the Faith of our first Reformers. I hope they don't look upon those Arguments, which our Forefathers in the *Protestant* Religion used, to prove the *Pope* to be Anti-Christ, to be trifling and inconclusive. If I thought so, I would revive them, and give them such a new Turn, as all should discern what Force there was in them. It may be, the People were tired with Satyrical Invectives against the *Pope*, so constantly founded in their Ears; and being Lovers of Novelty in Religion, as well as of new Fashions in their Cloaths, the *Clergy* did well to humour them by a Change of their Opinions and Doctrines in their Sermons. Take Notice, *Sir*, that I speak not this to the Dishonour, but to the Praise of our *Clergy*, who, upon every Turn of the Times, can cook up a Dish of different Principles and Tenets for the Palates of their Hearers; and since they are not conscientiously ty'd down to any old Opinions of the Primitive Church, they show abundance of Wit, Thought, and Learning too (for all you) in the Invention of new Notions.

But whatever be the Cause of our Clergy's leaving off their *Pulpit-Satyr* against

against the *Pope*, rather than your Cause shall succeed, I will resume that *Topick*, which at present I think there is no Occasion for, to overthrow and confute your Challenge upon the most malicious and ill-natured Question, that ever was started amongst Christians. In Answer to which, and to all that's contain'd in your Four *Free Gifts*, I shall Discourse in this following Method.

First, I shall shew, that whoever be *Anti-Christ*, the Ministers of the Letter can't be the *Worshippers* and *Ministers* of him.

Secondly, That a *Hireling* Priesthood can't be *Anti-Christian*; there being nothing more reasonable, than that they who preach and do other ministerial Functions, should be well paid for their Pains; neither would any Thing be a greater Shame to Christians at this Day, than to behold their Bishops and Pastors, as in the *Primitive* and *Apostolical* Times, at Hand-Labour for their Living.

Thirdly, I will call into Question the Truth of the Tradition about an *Elias* to come, which you and the Fathers are so fond of. And supposing he should come,

contrary to our Faith and Expectations, upon the Principles of the Ancients, to fight *Anti-Christ*, to convert the *Jews*, and reform the *Clergy*, by turning their Hearts and Understandings to the Fathers: It is reasonable to think, he'll be first sent to *Rome* or *Geneva*, to correct the superstitious Pomp of the Priesthood in the *one*, or the indecorous Slovenliness of the Preachers in the *other*, rather than to the Clergy of this City, who are most famous for the Golden Mean of Orthodoxy of Doctrine, Decency of Worship, and Comeliness of Habit between both. Not that I would have you to think, we will shew any Disrespect to the Person of *Elias*, if he should do us the Honour of his first Visit; no, we'll give him a Reception suitable to his *Eminency*; and because it is reasonable he should have the Precedency of our whole Order at our Assemblies and Feasts, we'll, by the Direction of the ancient *Jews*, provide a^h *Chair of State* for him, which we will do and talk of in a serious and grave Manner, and not in that ludicrous one we do

^h Hinc Sedile pro Elia honorificum concordēs extruxerunt, quia Angelus Fæderis audit. R. Kimch. apud *Levipedem* in Johan. cap. 1. v. 20.

for you, notwithstanding your Pretences to an extraordinary Share of that Sort of Learning, which his *Excellency* will be renown'd for.

Fourthly, I will disprove your Opinion taken from the Fathers, about the Two Apocalyptical *Witnesses*. And though we *Protestants* know not any other Opinion about them, that we can unanimously agree on; yet yours, if I can help it, shall not stand good; because it will end in the Shame of *Protestants*, and the Honour of *Papists*, whom for Superstition, Credulity, and Love of Traditions, we have so much exclaim'd against.

Fifthly, and *Lastly*, I will expose your Blunders, lay open your Falsifications, and disprove the many incredible Tales, you have made and told in your several *Free-Gifts*.

On these Heads will I discourse copiously and clearly; and if I do so, it will be no matter who is the Apocalyptical *Beast* or *Antichrist*; whether the *Pope*, or the *Turk*, or any one else, to the Determination of our Controversy. And if I exert my self with somewhat the more Vigor and Vehemence, my Readers will
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excuse it, not so much upon the Rage you have put me in, but because it is *pro Aris & Focis*, for our Religion and Interests, that I fight and write against an im-bitter'd *Adversary*, that would destroy both. Some in Controversy, whom I could name, as if they were more in *Jest* than in *Earnest*, have betray'd the Cause they would seem to defend; and have studiously put Objections and Arguments into the Mouths of their *Antagonists*, which otherwise they would hardly have thought of. As some *Gladiators*, who are agreed before-hand about the Victory, will Parry at each other, and sometimes seem to strike Home, to the Amusement of Spectators, when they are but in *Jest* all the while: So I could tell of Polemical *Wrestlers* upon the Stage of Theology, who by the Weakness of their Defence, have purposely given way to their *Adversaries* to triumph. Christianity it self has been betray'd by some of its pretended Advocates. And *Jews* and *Deists* have been harden'd in Infidelity by the mean Apologies, that are written for the Truth of Christ's Gospel. The Protestant Religion too, has suffer'd by some *Confutations of Popery*: For poor Arguments, and much Railing, for want of good Reasons, give an Advantage to Gainstayers. But,
 none,

none, that consider either the Power of my Passion, or the Force of my Reason against you, *Sir*, can suspect that I dally and fight Booty. If there be any that can maul you more, and treat you worse than I will; yet none, I hope, can distrust my being in Earnest, upon Perusal of my Discourse; and I question not but, at the End of the Controversy, all *By-Standers*, and impartial *Judges*, will decree the Victory and the Prize for me.

And now I mention the Words *Prize* and *Victory*, I remember that in your *Free Gifts*, you assimilate the Study of Theology to an *Olympick* Game; and by your sly Insinuations would be thought to be the *Apocalyptical Victor*, to whom *Jupiter Olympius*, for your notable Achievements in the *Emathian* Fields of *Elis* and *Elias*, will assign the several Honours and Rewards that *St. John* writes of. You talk sometimes of celestial Dainties, as if you had feasted on that recondite Food, which the Gods

Κρυψαντες γαρ εχουσιν θεοι βιον ανθρωποις,

have provided for greater *Heroes*. And you speak of the *bidden Manna* of *Revelations*, Chap. ii. v. 17. as if you had eaten

eaten of it, and could tell us who are ignorant of the old and new Manna, *what it is*. And you hint too, as if you had eaten of the Fruits of the *Tree of Life*, (Chap. ii. v. 7.) in the midst of the *Paradise* of God. And you write so often of the *New Jerusalem*, (Chap. iii. v. 12.) as if the Nature of that Holy City was written upon your Heart and Understanding. And because you have, in your own Conceit, found the *Philosopher's Stone*, or the *Pearl of great Price* spoken of in *St. Matthew*, Chap. xiii. v. 46. which ⁱ *Primasius* says is the same with the Apocalyptical *White Stone* of Chap. ii. v. 17. that, as ^k *Aretas* says, used to be given to *Olympick Conquerors*; so I'll warrant you, you'll put in for that too. But whatever betides me, you shall never carry off, to our Disreputation, such great Honours, and rich Prizes. Though I will not be so vain as to aim at them my self, yet, whatever it cost me, I'll

ⁱ Calculus candidus Gemma, pretiosa est, quæ ad Morem illius margaritæ, quam negotiator inveniens, venditis omnibus comparavit, intelligenda proponitur. In Loc. Apoc.

^k Τοιοῦτο δὲ τὴν λευκὴν Ψηφον, τὴν ἀπὸ τῶν ἐν τοῖς δια-
 τερσι καὶ τῖς σταθμοῖς ἀγωνιζομένων γνώριμον εἶναι, τῖς
 νικῶσι παρεχομένην, ἐνλαβεῖα τεθεικέν. In Loc. Apoc.

frustrate and disappoint you in your Pretensions to them. Who will be the *Apocalyptical Victor*, that is to be crown'd with Life, (Chap. ii. v. 10.) and enobled with a Pillar of Fame in the Temple of God, (which were also Two¹ old Rewards of the Olympick Hero) we are uncertain: For we Orthodox Divines of the Church of England, rarely or never trouble our Heads about this Matter, being of the Opinion of the judicious Dr. South, that the Study of the *Revelations* either finds Men mad, or leaves them so. But the most likely Person, if ever he should come, to be this *Victor* in the Theology, is *Elias*. The Fathers indeed do say of him, what is said of the *Apocalyptical Victor*, Chap. ii. v. 28. that he will be the^m *Morning Star*, for his Divine and Oriental Wisdom preceding the arising of the Spiritual and Intellectual Sun upon the Understandings of Mankind, against the acceptable and great Day: And they agree

¹ Præter Coronam Victori statuam Olympiæ dicari. *Alexand. ab Alex. de Genial. Lib. V. c. 8.*

^m Quin Johannes Baptista & Elias Thesbites Luciferi nomine a quibusdam appellantur, nec injuria. Johannes enim priorem folis Justitiæ Ortum antecessit, Elias vero posteriorem ejusdem Exortum antegredietur. *Andrea Casar. in Loc. Apoc.*

that he eats of the *Tree of Life in the Paradise of God*, and possibly may have Power given him (Chap. ii. v. 26, 27.) ποιμαίνειν τα ἔθνη, ἐν ῥαβδῷ σιδήρεα, τοὺς καρποὺς ὕλην τῆς ζωῆς, *to feed the Nations of the Iron Age, or Branch of the Church, with the Fruits of the said Tree*, whose *Sibyline Leaves* are for the Healing of the Nations: And He, not improbably, will be cloath'd with the *Victor's White Garments* (Chap. iii. v. 5.) of the Spirit of Prophecy; and will have his Name indelibly written in the *Book*, of which Christ is the *Life*: And it may be supposed too, that he'll eat of the *hidden Manna*, because, upon the Authority of the ancientⁿ *Jews*, he is to restore and bring *that* along with him. But as we have rejected the Tradition of an *Elias* to come, which nothing you have hitherto written, has reconciled us to, we let this Matter rest; and only caution you against the Ambition of being this *Apocalyptical Victor*, with his Honours and Rewards; which if you aim at, we'll lay you lower in the Dust of Dishonour, and give you a more ignomi-

ⁿ Israeli reddet Urnam Mannæ & Phialam Sacri Olei, &c. R. Kimch. apud Levipedem in Matt. c. 17. v. 11.

nious Fall than any you have as yet met with.

Good God, that any one so contemptible for Ignorance, as you are, should feed your self with the vain Fancy of becoming once the *Olympionices* in the Field of Polemical Theology! Had you aim'd at the Fame of the naughty Man, whose Name is deservedly bury'd in ° Oblivion, for firing the Temple of *Diana*, I should not have wonder'd; believing you to be such an *Incendiary*, as would set our Church of the Apocalyptical *Ephesus*, which we adore like a Goddess in the Wilderness, in a Flame; if she and her Worshipers had no more Wit and Caution, than to be incens'd by you. But for your being the *Coralus* or *Corylus* of the Church, that is, the prime Victor on our Spiritual *Olympus*, is what you must not dream of. I will not say it is absolutely impossible you should succeed in this towering Thought; but if you do, you must have a sacerdotal *Epomidis* of the Spirit of Prophecy on your Shoulders, and then the wonderful and acceptable

° Sicuti quondam a communi Concilio Asiæ decretum est, uti Nomen ejus qui Templum Dianæ Ephesiz incenderat, nequis ullo in Tempore nominaret. *Aul. Gellii*, Lib. II. c. 6.

Year, you would preach, will commence with the greatest Miracles.

But hold, I have Three Objections against your being this Theological and Olympick Conqueror. One I take from St. *Clement* ^p of *Alexandria*, who speaking of the *Apocalyptical Victor*, says, he must be endow'd with *Courage* to undergo Dangers, and with *Wisdom* to understand *Ænigmas*; that is, as *Hervetus* upon St. *Clement* expounds the Word *αινιγμα*, mystically and allegorically to interpret the Scriptures: But whether you, Sir, can pretend to both these Qualifications, or so much as to either of them, I leave to your own Conscience.

Another Objection is taken from ^a *Philo Judeus*, who says that the Olympick Conqueror in Philosophical and Theological Combats, will carry off the *Prizes* without Envy. But you can't do so: Do you think our *Bishops*, and other dignify'd *Clergy* will not envy you? Do you think they would not relinquish their Pre-

^p Καὶ τὸ ἀγωνισμὰ ἡμῶν, κατὰ τὸν Λεοντίνον Γοργιαν, διτλῶν δὲ ἀρετῶν διείκει· πολμας μὲν τὸ κινδυνὸν υπομέναι· σοφίας δὲ αἰνιγμα γινῶναι. Strom. Lib. I.

^a Θαυμασιότατον δὲ καὶ πρῶτον οὐ φανερχών· ὡ καὶ τὰ πρῶτα τῶν ἀθλητῶν οὐ φθονήσιν λαμβάνοντι. In Lib. de Agricult.

ferments,

ferments, and lay down their Lives too for the Honours and Rewards of the *Apocalyptical Victor*? If they don't envy you, it must be, because the Sufferings, Slanders and Defamations, like so many Wounds and Bruises of *Theatrical Gladiators*, you are to grapple with, will be so great, that none will envy you the Prize, for the Severity of the Contest in the way to it.

A Third Objection I have from *Alexander ab Alexandro*, the Mythologist, who says the *Olympick Victor*, (and you know the *Apocalyptical Rewards*, in the Opinion of ^r *St. Clement*, bear an Analogy to the *Olympick ones*) will carry away with him a ^s *Crown of Glory to his Native Country*. But how is it possible you should do so? Don't you know, that *Frankland*, *Liptrot*, and others, have so defamed and disgraced you in your *Native Country*, that she will never think that by you, especially if you are a Prophet, any Honour can redound to her.

* Ο χαρ λογθ χαδα περ το κηρυγμα το ολυμπιασι στα-
ναι τον ανικητον. Strom. Lib. I.

* Cumque Victoribus dabatur Corona, vetus erat
mos, ut non illos qui vincerent, sed illorum Patri-
am per Praconem coronari. In Die. Geni. Lib. V.
c. 8.

But

But why do I argue at all seriously, as if it was possible, you should ever be this glorious and illustrious *Hero* and *Victor*, which upon the Opinion of the ^t ancient *Greeks*, will be greater Honour than the Triumph of a *Roman* Emperor, upon the Conquest and Reduction of a whole Country. If it should happen contrary to our Imagination, that you have found the *Apocalyptical Beast*, and can tell the Number of his Name, which you have not as yet unfolded the Mystery of, I am willing, because *St. John* says, *here is the Mind and the Man, that has Wisdom*, you make your Boasts of it, and say of your self in the Words of the *Poet*,

Sum victor superansque animis, tauroque superbus.

and by my Consent you shall have *Entellus's* Reward of a *Bull* for your Pains,

—*Palmam Entello, Taurumque relinquunt.*

But for any other *Honours* and *Rewards*, that will be given you, you may go look for them.

^t Græcis Olympionicen esse majus censeretur Munus quam Romæ de Hostibus Triumphus. *Alexand. ab Alex. Lib. V. c. 8.*

But

But all this is by way of Digression: I come now to my Heads of Discourse before laid down. Behold, *Sir*, the Order in which they *lye*, and admire their Connexion to, and Dependance on each other. I shall not only warmly, but closely and methodically treat on them: For we, the *Clergy*, of the Church of *England*, are close and methodical Writers upon any Subject, as well as Preachers upon any Text. We can run our Divisions and Subdivisions upon any Portion of Scripture; neither is there any Text of the Bible so hard, that by the Help of a few Digressions we can't pertinently speak to; and what has been our laudable Custom ever since the Reformation, *open Doctrines* upon it, without departing from the *Letter*, to the Admiration of our Auditors. We can, I say, run our Divisions and *open Doctrines* from a Text, without departing from the Letter. This I observe to you, because I know you, *Sir*, are of the Opinion of ^v *St. Jerome*, that *He only can open the Texts of the Book of God, who*

^v Ille solum Librum potest solvere & aperire, qui Scripturarum Sacramenta cognovit, & intelligit ænigmata & Verba tenebrosa propter Mysteriorum Magnitudinem, & interpretatur Parabolas, & occidentem Litteram transfert in Spiritum vivificantem. *In Dan. cap. 12.*

under-

understands the hidden Sacraments of it, who is skill'd in *Ænigmas* and dark Sentences; and, being apprised of the Magnitude of the Mysteries contain'd in the Sacred Oracles, can unfold Parables, and translate the killing Letter of the Law and the Prophets into a Spiritual Sense, which is the Life of them. And, for ought I know, by this your Opinion, and the Prosecution of your Studies accordingly, you may aim at the Wisdom and Honours of the Prophet, whom *Philo* * *Judeus*, and † *St. Jerome*, so highly applaud for his Skill in Divination, his Expertness at Parables, and his Gift of Prophecy, beyond any of his Time, for the Interpretation of the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Christ. If so, much Good may his Wisdom and Honour do you, I envy you not. But this I must needs say, that was I a Friend to the *Transmigration* of Souls, or held the Doctrine of *Renovation* and *Regeneration* of all Things, and could believe with the *Sibyl*, saying,

Magnus ab integro seclorum nascitur Ordo,

* *Ἀντὶ ἐπὶ μαντεῖν μετὰ τὸν Μωϋσῆ, ὡς ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἐμμανήσῃ τοῦ μαντικῆς εἶδός.* In Lib. I. de Vit. Moïsis.

† *Quomodo Balaam Ariolus sic futura Christi Myſteria prophetavit, ut nullus propemodum Prophetarum tam aperte de eo vaticinatus est.* In *Epist. ad Oceanum*.

or with the Apostles and Fathers of the Church, that all the *old Things* and Persons under the Law, which *are pass'd away*, will under the Evangelical State become *new* ; I should suspect that *that* old Prophet, you are so like him, was regenerate, and risen to Life again in you.

But to speak no more of this ; let me tell you, that St. *Jerome's* Opinion above, about the *opening* and interpreting the Scriptures, is very foolish and ridiculous, and though the rest of the Fathers be of the same Mind with him, is deservedly disapproved of by us, who since the Reformation, have given up that way of the Interpretation of Oracles, as what by Experience we can make nothing of. The most elaborate and famous *John Calvil* (for I will commend him without asking your Leave for't) says, ^z St. *Jerome* was a Man of a *perverse and malignant Spirit*, for his Recommendation of *Calibacy*, for the sake of divine Contemplation. But had he been aware of the Passage in St. *Jerome*, above, I question not, but he would have declared him a

^z Hieronimus nimis luculentum maligni perversique Ingenii specimen in eo edidit. *In Matt*, cap. 19. v. 20.

Reprobate at least, if not a damn'd *Heric* for it.

And you, Sir, do very imprudently, as well as erroneously, to resume and revive that obsolete and discarded Opinion of St. *Jerome*. Don't you consider what *Philo*^a *Judeus* says of the Prophet above-mention'd, that *you stand by your self* at this Day in your Notions ; which because they are very disagreeable to us, may some Time or other be of ill Consequence to you ? Neither I, nor any of my *Brethren*, care to threaten you, but you may remember to take Warning by the Danger of the Prophet *Elias*, *who was left alone* ; and a *Word to the Wise is enough*. And now it comes into my Head, I remember another simple Opinion of St. *Jerome*, borrow'd from the *Jews*, to wit, that *Elias* and the Prophet, now spoken of, are Evangelically the same Person ; but by what Art of *Metempsychosis*, *Metamorphosis*, *Transmigration*, *Transformation*, *Transfiguration*, or *Metaschematization*, they can be made one, is a Mystery that we Ministers of the Letter will never trouble our Heads about ; neither do I think the

^a Ο ἁ μὴ ὁμοιωθεὶς ἑξαρπύνης δεσποφειλά. In Lib. I. de Vit. Mosi.

Thing possible, unless one and the same Person fulfil the Ministry of both of them : If so, then it will be the less hard to conceive how *Elias*, according to the *Jews*, should be ^b *Phineas* too, with his Sword of the Spirit to run the *Whore* of the Church with her *Anti-Christ* through ; and even how a *Chorus* of Prophets should attend upon *Elias* at his Coming. But all this we look upon as an idle, ridiculous, and incredible Dream of the *Jews* and *Fathers*.

But to return again to the naughty Opinion of St. *Ferome*, above. Be it known to you, Sir, no regular, orderly and establish'd *Priesthood*, cares to be disturb'd in their Principles, much less in their Interests ; and as the *Clergy* of the Church of *England* are a venerable and learned Body of Men, of singular Talents to preach upon any Texts of Scripture without Penetration into Mysteries, which tends as much to their Advantage, as if they were the greatest *Mystery-Mongers* ; so it is provoking in you to espouse the Opinion

^b Jam quod ad Nominis Mutationem attinet, nescio unde, veluti in Apocraphis, moti Hebræi tradunt *Phinees* illum, qui est Eleazari filius, ipsum esse *Heli*am, & Immortalitatem ipsi promissam. *Origen. in Joh. Evang. Tom. 7.*

above, which reflects on our Wisdom and Understanding; and if you should persist in the Inculcation of that Error, and our Brethren should let you go off with Impunity, I should much wonder at it.

I know it was the Opinion of old *Orpheus*, that excellent Philosopher, and mystical *Harper*, that none but *one*, as you may be, skill'd in *Oriental*, *Chaldaick* and *Oneirocritical* Learning, in which he agrees with *St. Jerome* before, can attain to the Sight and Knowledge of God and his Providence;

Ου γαρ κεν τις ιδοι θνητων μεροπων κρανοντα,
Ει μη μονογενης τις απορρωξ φυλου ανωνδεν
Χαλδαιων.

And it was, I own, the Opinion of ^c *St. Clement of Alexandria*, who contends for the *Hieroglyphical* and *Oneirocritical* Art of interpreting of the Scriptures, that in Time a Man, skill'd in it, would be found for the opening and Interpretation of them. And according to ^d *St. Augustin*,

^c Ευρησει γαρ τον συνησιντα η γεραει. *Strom.* L. IV.

^d Manifestationem Prophetiæ futuram credimus in secundo Christi Adventu, quo in Claritate venturus est, cujus Adventus Præcursor speratur Elias, sicut hujus Johannes fuit. *In Quest.* 58. *Lib de 83 Question.*

Elias,

Elias should be *this* Man, because the Manifestation and Understanding of the Prophecy of the Law is reserv'd for him and his Times. But away, say we, with all such *Chimerical* Fancies, which would bring to nought the Wisdom of the most Orthodox and Reverend Priesthood, that ever was had in Admiration by Mankind.

If we should allow the Scriptures to consist of *Ænigmas*, *Parables*, and *Visions*, according to St. *Jerome*, and other Fathers, you will revive the Opinion of the Church universal in its first Ages, *viz.* that the *new Israelites* or Christians, of whom the *old Israelites* were a Type, are only those, who see God by Vision; which is a Notion that at this Time a Day is not to be born with. The famous *Monsieur Dalle* has judiciously flouted at this Opinion; and he was in the Right on't; for if we admit of it, you'll make us *Protestant Ministers* of the *Letter*, no more akin to the *Primitive* Christians, than the *Moabites* and *Amalekites* of old were to the *Israelites*, that came out of *Egypt*. But we will never endure, I assure you, to be typified and figur'd by the Priests of *Agag* and *Belphegor*, who, according to your Philosophy, are Two of the Number of the Name of the *Beast* or *Antichrist*.

I remember, indeed, that ^e *Origen* says, that many of the Primitive Church were converted by *Vision*, and forcibly, as it were, against Inclination turn'd Christians: And *Eusebius*, a credible *Writer* of Ecclesiastical History, tells us of Multitudes in the Reigns of *Dioclesian*, *Maximinus*, *Maxentius*, and *Licinius*, whom the clearest Vision of the Impletion of the Prophecy of the Law brought into the Church. And it might be so then; but, why we in these latter Times, as you call them, of the *Apostacy*, should think of *seeing Visions*, and *dreaming of Dreams*, I discern no Reason. I know you would bring us to *Visions* and *Dreams*, and *Revelations*, if you could, because *this* would make the Mystery of your *Beast*, or ^g *Abomination* of a God in the Wilderness, and the Time of the *Apocalyptical Forty and Two Months* of his Worship, clear and plain. But hold

^e Dicetur tamen, multos pæne invitos attractos esse ad Christianam Religionem, spiritu quodam repente mutante Intellectum eorum, ut pro Verbo exorso ad id Temporis non cunctarentur mortem oppetere post *Visiones* oblatas ipsis vel dormientibus vel vigilantibus. *Cont. Cels. Lib. I.*

^f *Vid. Eccles. Hist. Lib. VIII, IX, X.*

^g Ἀντιχρῆς ὁ ἥξει δε εἰς τὴν ἐρημίαν τοῦ κοσμοῦ. Βέλυσμα γὰρ ἐστὶ τῆς ἐρημώσεως. *Greg. Nazian. Orat. 47.*

there ;

there ; if we are not forward to open the Eyes of our Understanding, for that Sight, none can blame us. We are Christians already, and what would you have more of us ? Though we go by the Name of *Protestant* Priests and *Ministers* of the *Letter* ; yet are we Preachers of the Gospel, as well as were the Apostles and Fathers of the Church, who were *Ministers* of the *Spirit*, and not of the *Letter*. I know you would have the Name of *Protestant* distinguish'd from *Christian*, as if in *our* Priesthood they had no Relation to each other ; but you shall not, if I can help it. The good ^h *Bishop Willis*, upon a certain Occasion join'd *Christian* and *Protestant* together in a *Bishop*, and consequently in a *Priest* of the Church of *England*, and let's see, who dares separate them.

But hold, I had like to have made another Digression from the Purpose of my Heads of Discourse above laid down. Behold them again, *Sir*, and judge beforehand, whether, if I as closely and strenuously pursue them, as I hitherto have done, you will not be confuted and confounded. I assure you, I can notably

^b See his Speech in the House of Lords, &c. p. 10.

perform upon them : But before I proceed any farther on this Work to your Confutation and Shame, give me Leave to address my self to my *Brethren* of the *Clergy* of the Church of *England*, and take their Advice in some Cases. I am a little apprehensive, lest my Indignation against you should transport me to some Indiscretion, that may be offensive to them ; and I had rather spare you, *Sir*, notwithstanding my Anger against you, a great many *Blows* I can give you, than by a chance *Stroke* wound any of my Friends. Therefore do you, *Sir*, stand by a while, and breathe, whilst I ask the Advice of my *Brethren* in these Cases following. And,

First, My Dear *Brethren*, give me your Opinion, before I go any farther in this Controversy with our most inveterate *Adversary*, how I should treat the Fathers of the Church, who are his Abettors ; and whether I should vilify and despise them to the last degree for espousing a Cause so much to our Disreputation, Prejudice and Disadvantage. I am well laid in with cramp Words, Satyr, and the sharpest *Invectives* against their Authority ; but as I have as yet been sparing of them, so it may be question'd, whether it may be
 pru-

prudent to lay them on thick. It is certain, that the *Lutherans* and *Calvinists* abroad, because the Fathers favour'd the *Papists*, have given them the foulest and most opprobrious Language that could be thought of. *Feuardentius* ⁱ, a Popish Writer hath collected much of this our *Protestant* Rhetorick; and by that little Conversation I have with *Luther*, *Calvin*, *Beza*, and others, I find they don't speak sparingly of their Reputation and Character. But whether we, the Clergy of the Church of *England*, who have hitherto profess'd a Veneration for the Fathers, as if our Church and her Constitution was exactly conformable to the Primitive Pattern, may do well to deviate into ill Language against them, is the Question. *Monsieur Dallee*, in his Treatise of the Use of the Fathers, treats them in a peculiar Manner, that is, after he has abused and reflected upon them, as much as is possible, for Ignorance, Error and Absurdities, he coaxes them up again with some smooth, fair and complimentary Words, to their Praise and Honour. And I should like this way too, but it is such Dissimulation and Hypocrisy, that our Ad-

ⁱ Vid. Theomach. Calvinist. p. 3.

versary, who almost suspects *Dallee* of Infidelity, will see through it. There is a pretty Allusion in ^k *Rivet* and *Dallee*¹ (as good Wits will jump) both to the Honour of the Fathers, and of us *Protestants*, that I was mightily pleas'd with, that is, they compare the Fathers to Men of *Gigantick* Stature in Theology, and the Protestant Writers to *Dwarfs*, standing upon the Shoulders of the Fathers, and seeing consequently farther into Divine Truth than they did. This Comparison, I say, I was well pleas'd with; but our *Adversary*, who turns every Thing to the worst Sense, hearing of it, said it was true, the Fathers were Men of a *high Stature* in Christ, and the Protestants are degenerated *Dwarfs*, who are so far from standing on the Shoulders of the Fathers, that, like *Pigmies* of low and groveling Parts and Understandings, they stand upon the Earth of the *Letter*, biting at the Shins of the Fathers, who were Men of divine and sublime Reason. This Perversion of the Similitude has spoil'd the good Use I would otherwise have made of it. After

^k Scimus Pygmæos Gygantum Humeris impositos, plus quam ipsos Gygantes videre. *De Autorit. Pat.* c. 4.

¹ See his *Use of the Fathers*, L. II. c. 6. p. 192.

all, *Sirs*, by your Leave, I think it best to throw all the Dirt I can rake up against the Authority of the Fathers; and, notwithstanding our former Professions of Love and Esteem for them, do believe we may justify our selves for so doing. For we had not fallen out with the Fathers, if they had not thus broken Friendship with us first. If, upon this their Resurrection from the Dead, they had not began with us, and given us the most provoking ill Names of ^m *Idiots*, ⁿ *Hereticks*, *Ministers* of ^o *Death*, and ^p *Damnation*, and the like, we would never have made suitable Returns to them; and therefore if I give them a *Rowland* for their *Oliver*, and should be more than even with them in reproachful and approbrious Language, all the Lovers of the *Clergy*, of our Church, and her Constitution will commend me for it.

^m Οἱ ἰδιῶται ἐξ ἐπιπολῆς δεχομένοι τὸν λόγον. Clement. Alex. Strom. Lib. VI.

ⁿ Sunt inter Hæreticos, qui contendunt minime convenire ut Veteris Testamenti Scripta mysticè atque aliter quam de Rebus ipsis interpretentur, graviterque accusant eos qui contra faciunt. *Mosis Bar Ceph. de Paradiso.* P. 1. c. 3.

^o Ministratio Litteræ est Ministratio Mortis. *August. contra Adversar. Legis. Lib. II. Sect. 27.*

^p Ministri occidentis Litteræ & Damnationis. *Origen. in Matt. cap. 27.*

But some one will say here, what will the Fathers and their Authority be good for, after I have vilified and despised them in the Controversy before? I answer with the judicious and impartial *Monsieur Dallee*^a; that they will be as useful as ever to confute, if we can, any mordern Errors and Heresies that we dont like, out of them. And if he should reply here, that it is a Rule in the civil Law, that, *Testem quem quis adducet pro se, tenetur accipere contra se*; that is, a Man is bound to admit of the Evidence of a Witness against himself, as well as for himself; and consequently the Authority of the Fathers is as good against us in this Case, as for us in another. Then I will rejoin, (as *Plowden* did, when the Case was alter'd) that though the Rule be good in civil Courts of Judicature, yet it was never allow'd of by Protestants in Controversy, who sometimes set themselves against the Reason and Authority of Men, whom at other Times they approve of; which is a Thing so notorious, without any Disparagement of our Religion, as none can be ignorant of it. But,

^a Of the Use of the Fathers. Book II. c. 6. p. 187.

Secondly,

Secondly, I beg of you, *Dear Brethren*, to inform me of some Primitive Doctrines, Opinions, or Customs, that our Church upon the Reformation revived, and has since continued. As for my self, I know of none; but I impute this my Ignorance of them, more to my unacquaintedness with the Fathers, and the Excellency of our Constitution, than to the want there is of them. And I hope some of our great *Doctors* of immense Reading and Learning, will help me out at this dead Lift. The Reason that I crave this of you, is because I have to do with a perverse *Adversary*, who some time or other will demand of us, *What are the Doctrines of our Church, that are incontestably Primitive in Opposition to the Papists?* It must be own'd, that the *Papists*, as appears from his *Free-Gifts*, hold some Opinions and Traditions of the Fathers, that we have apostatized from; and unless we can tell on the other Hand, of some of our Primitive Doctrines, that the *Papists* have confessedly deserted, our Glorifying of Antiquity, and of the Excellency of our Church, and of her Conformity to the Primitive one, is all vain. I could indeed tell of some Primitive Opinions, that our Church upon the Reformation resumed; and how her *Clergy* used

to thunder, from the Press and the Pulpit, against the *Papists*, for their Apostacy from them. But what are become of these Opinions for an Age past, I know not. Whether they are out of Fashion; or whether our Clergy, like *Men of Reserves and Distinctions*, have brought themselves off of them, I have not Time to enquire. And I can tell of the Corruptions and Superstitions of the Church of *Rome*, which our Church is purg'd of, but this, even upon the Confession of *Papists* themselves, will not answer the Question above; but we must speak of Primitive Doctrines resumed, that the *Catholicks* have confessedly forsaken. Our Adversary himself is sensible enough of the Corruptions of the Church of *Rome*; and though he speaks sometimes highly of that Church for retaining of Primitive Traditions, as if he was inclin'd to *Popery*, yet I believe there is nothing at all in it. If he does extravagantly sometimes commend the *Jesuits*, and other *Catholick* Writers, for their Learning and Zeal for Antiquity, I suppose it is (*what is like his Tricks,*) more to vex us Protestant Priests, than for any extraordinary Affection he has for their adulterous and corrupt Church. But, *good Sirs*, think of the Question above, and, if you can
help

help me, leave me not in the Lurch about it, because of the Consequence : For as the *Papists* do calumniate our Church for her Extraction out of *King Henry* the Eighth's C—dp—ce ; so unless we can in Earnest talk of her Primitive Purity in Doctrine, after another Fashion, than we have hitherto done, our *Adversary* will say we are no better than the Worshipers of *Belphegor*. But,

Thirdly, For my carrying on of this Controversy with my Adversary, and for my better Maintenance of the first Head of my Discourse, I wish some of you, *Dear Brethren*, would search to find, if possible, in some blind Corner or other of the Writings of the Fathers, some Assertions for the literal Sense of the Law only. I desire not the *Authors* of the *Delphick* Oracle to do this for me : For they are the most unhappy Citators of the Fathers, that ever were, bringing such a Testimony out of them, for a Cause, that made directly against it. But if you, *Sirs*, can discover some few dark and oblique Passages in their Works to this Purpose, I can make good Use of them : For then I will magnify them to the Skies for Primitive and Orthodox Opinions ; or, at least, to the Mortification of our
Adver-

Adversary, will do as *Dallee* has done, that is, set the Fathers one against another, and so argue fairly, that their Authority is of no Worth, unless they were entirely united in their Opinions, and of one Mind. I have been searching myself for some Passages to this End; but I must confess, every Page of their Writings is enough to give me a Fit of the Spleen; neither can I turn to any Part of them, but they are so full of *Allegories*, that my Stomach is turn'd against them. As therefore I despair of any Testimonies out of their Writings for the Letter of the Law; so I will,

Fourthly, By your Approbation, *Dear Sirs*, prove the Allegorical and Mystical Interpretation of the Law to have been an old Error. To this Purpose I will shew of whom, *to wit*, of the ancient *Jews*, an ignorant and stiffneck'd Generation of Men, and of the Philosophers of the *Gentiles*, a Crew of mystical and mythological *Dotards*, and of many unguarded Expressions of the Apostles; the Fathers derived this Error. Then I will shew, how there were many worthy and great Authors in the Primitive Times, such as *Celsus*, *Porphry*, and *Marcion*, who blamed the Fathers for their Allegories on the
the

the Law, and have been hardly enough commended by some of the greatest *Divines* of our Church; such as Dr. *Cave*^r, for their judicious Descants on, and Insight into that Error. After which I will shew, that our first Reformers, as *Luther* and others, did well to renounce the Allegorical way of interpreting the Law, because it was and had been an *idle, foolish, and monkish* Study, which the Religious Orders of all Ages of the Church had delighted in. And lastly, I will exhibit many Instances of the Allegories of the Fathers, which are enough to make our gravest Bishops to laugh heartily at their Childishness and Impertinence, and more than enough to make the great *Dallee*^t say, *The Fathers in their Writings are sometimes so jolly and sportful, coming over us with rare allegorical Observations, as have scarcely any more Solidity, than those Castles of Cards, that little Children are wont to make.* And if in

^r Vid. *Histor. Litter. V. 11. in Philone Judeo.*

^s *Vestigia & Exempla Patrum me terrent, quia suis Allegoriis obscurant Doctrinam, & avocant speculationibus allegoricis a genuino sensu verborum.*

—— Primum a stolidis & ociosis Monachis ortæ sunt Allegoriæ. Ego itaque odi *Allegorias.* In *Genes. cap. 30.*

^t *Of the Use of the Fathers.* Book II. c. 3. p. 55.

doing all this, I am very witty, pungent and satyrical, none will think it any more unbecoming of my Gravity and Function, than it was Dr. *Swift's* to write the *Tale of a Tub*; neither will any blame me, if I sometimes bite hard upon the Fathers for following the ill Example of some before them in Allegories, and for setting a worse one to others after them. But, now I think on't, I have a *Salvo* for the Credit of the Fathers, which I have learn'd of *Monsieur Dalle*^v, to wit, That the Fathers *never wrote with a Design to be believ'd or follow'd as Patterns in Theology*; much less did they ever *Dream*, (though they were *Dreamers* too) that their Authority would have been so abused, as it is by our *Adversary*, to the Disreputation and Disinterest of such a learned and venerable Body of Men, as are our Clergy. Nay, I believe I may say, in the Words of the good Protestant ^{*} *Dalle*, after he had wrote with as much Vehemence and Virulence, as I can, against the Authority of the Fathers, *that if they were now alive, they would give us Thanks for the Pains we have taken in*

^v Ibid. Book II. Chap. 3. p. 40.

^{*} Ibid. Book. II. Chap. 4. p. 61.

discovering their Errors. Perhaps our *Adversary* will not believe, that they would thank us at all, or if they did, it would be only for saying no more reproachful and dishonourable Things undeservedly of them: Just as that Hearty and Loyal Knight, Sir John Owen, thank'd his Judges, in the Times of Iniquity and *Anarchy*, for the Favour of the *Axe* instead of the *Halter*; so the Fathers, (our *Adversary* will say) may thank us for only making them Sons of Ignorance and Error, when we might have declared them Children of Darknes and Damnation. And supposing this be the Sum and Substance of the Thanks we should have from them, it is considerable, and justly due to us; in as much as we Protestant Priests have declared often some of our *Protestant Brethren*, as for Instance, the *Quakers*, to be in a dangerous and damnable State for much less Errors, than those we can accuse the Fathers of. But,

Fifthly, As to the Second Head of my Discourse concerning the *Hire* that is due to our *Priesthood*; never fear me, my *Dear Brethren*, for the managing that Point well. I am stored with Arguments and Authorities to prove the Reasonable-

ness of our Protestant Priesthood's being sumptuously and plentifully provided for. And though our *Aduersary* may be laid in with, what he has not as yet produced, Testimonies out of the Fathers against *Preaching for Hire*; yet I know how to set them all aside; and to prove that the Fathers (like the *Fox* in the Fable, that said the Grapes were sowre, that were out of his Reach) were only against Tithes, &c. because the Clergy of their Time were unprovided for by the Laws of the *Empire*: And if they, as well as *Tatian*, did speak against the Revenues of the *Gentile* Priests, it was because they either envied them; or, more truly speaking, thought it hard, that *Heathen* Idolaters should enjoy that, which might be better bestow'd on *Christian* Ministers. It is a commendable Thing to a Christian Nation, to see the Successors of the poor Apostles live in State and Grandeur; and a Sign of the Love of the Gospel in the People, when their Preachers are well fed, kept and stuff'd. Though *Epiphanius*² says, that even the Bishops in his Time

¹ Ὡς παρὰ τοῦ Ρωμαίων Βασιλεως ἐπιστολὴ χρυσοῦς
 ἑξακοσίου λαμβάνειν πέναις εἰς οὐδὲν χρησίμους. In Orat.
 cont. Græcos.

² In Hæresi 80. Sect. 6.

work'd with their Hands for their Living; yet it was undoubtedly a Dishonour to the Laity to let them: And I don't doubt but our Nation would cry Shame on our *Bishops* and *Parsons*, if, whilst they were so well provided for by the Laws of the Land, they should betake themselves to Hand-Labour. If our Bishops and Clergy were destitute of Ecclesiastical Incomes, and were to work for their Living, as the Apostles, and many of the Fathers of the Church did, they would soon be as ignorant; and then where would be the Propagation of the Gospel, and the wholesome Instruction of Mankind? What Encouragement would there be for Study, if the *Clergy* were not well paid for't? Worldly Labour in a Priest, is an Avocation from Books, and a divine Contemplation; and we could never preach such notable and quaint Sermons on a *Sunday*, if we were not at Leisure all the Week before to compose them. Our Discourses on a *Sunday*, if we were to follow worldly Vocations on the *Week-Days*, would be no better than the extemporary Effusions of the *Quakers*, which though they may serve as well for the Edification of the People, yet are not such Rhetorical Flourishes in the Opinion of all nice Judges. If any Thing be a Re-
proach

proach to the opulent *City* of *London*; it is because her Ministers are not amply enough provided for; or Mr. *Stackhouse* would never have complain'd, in the Title Page of his Book, of *the Miseries and Hardships that the Inferior Clergy labour under*. Go on therefore, my *Beloved Brethren*, in spite of all the Malice of our *Adversary*, in the Enjoyment of your Revenues. Increase them as much as you can. Study Arts for the Augmentation of your Rights. Don't blush for, what our *Adversary* has reflected upon you, your new Demands for Christenings. Though *Sacraments really are not vendible*, yet your Fees for them, I question not, are reasonable; or you, who are so conscientious in your *Practices*, as well as in your *Principles*, would never make a Demand of them. And if the poorest of the People think much to pay *Ten Groats*, or *Five Shillings*, (considering too the Extent of your Pains) for the making a Child, a *Christian* and an *Inheritor* of the Kingdom of Heaven, I know not what they will willingly pay for.

After our *Adversary* had reflected upon you for your Demands for Christenings, he adds an *&c.* like an *Inuendo*, as if you were guilty of some other Extortion upon your Neighbours. I guess what he means,

means, viz. your Genteel Intimations to the People for, and kind Acceptations of Payment for the Visitation of the Sick; Administration of the Sacrament to the Sick; Burials of the Dead; and of somewhat extraordinary for *Desk-Service* at Burials, &c. In which Cases, I believe he, or the *Citizens* for him, may give many Instances of exacted *Fees*; but I applaud you for them; and wish for the Good of the Church, that all such *Fees*, which your Modesty will give you Leave to desire, were made legal. Why should you do any Christian Offices for nothing? Who should set any Price on your Pains, but your selves? Every *Tradesman* and *Artificer* puts what Value he thinks fit on his own Goods and Labour; And why should the Clergy be debarr'd of this Privilege? Your Offices in short are all holy and useful, and you ought to be well paid in the *Retail*, as well as in the *Lump* for them. I wish I could put you in the way to make your *Rectories* and *Vicaridges* as good as most *Bishopricks*, that every *Incumbent*, for his Ease and State, might be enabled to keep a *Coach*: Nay, why should not every *Curate* be provided with a *Chaise*, as well as our Author of *Free-Gifts* is suffer'd to keep a *Chariot*, forsooth! to ride in, at every Turn, to *Paradise*

radise and *Parnassus*; and in which too, because it is made of the purest Gold, and is by much more glorious than the *Lord-Mayor's* Coach, he thinks to triumph, like a Victorious *Hero*, through the Streets of the *New Jerusalem*, over the *Ministers* of the *Letter*; but we are not as yet so easily overcome, nor, if possible, will be led as *Captives* to him.

Dr. Bennet can't be enough applauded for his late Attempt upon his *Parishioners*, in which, if he had succeeded, he had augmented a poor *Vicaridge* of 700 *l.* to 4000 *l. per Annum*. And though he miscarry'd by the cross grain'd Opposition of his *Neighbours*, yet it must be own'd, that,

— *Magnis tamen excidit Ausis,*

it was well meant by him; and I hope it will be recorded to his Honour, that he had been a great Benefactor to the *Vicar* of *St. Giles*, if the *Inhabitants* of the *Parish* had not made an unhappy Stand against him.

After this Manner, *my Brethren*, can I write in Defence of whatever Revenues, Stipends, Fees or Wages you already have, or can think of. And you shall see how
finely

finely I will do it, when I come to the particular handling of this Point. But,

Sixthly, The Third Head of my Discourse is to prove the Expectation of an *Elias*, a mere Fable. But here again, *Dear Brethren*, I ask your Advice, before I proceed too far on it. Upon Second Thoughts I am at a Stand, whether I had best absolutely reject, and ridicule the Tradition about his Coming or not. I am fraught with Arguments, without any old Authorities, to prove the Story of his Coming, a mere Dream. But what if after all, there should be some Weakness in them, that I am not aware of? This would put us all to the Blush at his Coming, and we should be upbraided by our Enemies of the Church of *Rome*, with our contemptuous Treatment of that Tradition. On the other Hand, if we should do what is mean and dishonourable in a *Polemical* Divine, yield to the Truth of the Tradition, we give our present *Adversary* an Advantage to triumph over us. What then must I do in this Strait? I can think of nothing else, than strenuously to urge what Arguments I can against the Coming of an *Elias*: And if we should be mistaken in the Event, I think we ought not to be reproach'd with so much

Infidelity, as our Author would charge us with. Our *Protestant* Apostacy in the Case is not so universal, as he would insinuate. For besides Mr. *Mede*, and Dr. *Gell*, whom he has mentioned for holding the Tradition, I find ^a *Alstedins* and ^b Dr. *Hackvil*, Two *Protestant* Writers, whom our *Adversary* either ignorantly or wilfully pass'd over, to be of the same Mind too. I wonder indeed, that Dr. *Hackvil* should entertain this Opinion; because the Coming of an *Elias* supposes a constant and gradual Apostacy of the Church to the very Sink of Times for Ignorance and Error, in which *Elias* for their Reformation is to make his Appearance: But this overthrows Dr. *Hackvil's* Hypothesis, who would prove there is no such Degeneracy in the Church; but that our Times are as eminent for *Divines* of

^a In Diatrib. de Mille Annis Apocal.

^b If for the effecting of this great Work (of Reformation and Conversion) we should grant (that which all Antiquity, both *Jewish* and *Christian*, much beats upon) that *Elias* shall come and restore all Things, I cannot see what great Absurdity can from thence be inferr'd; or what Article of Christian Faith it impugneth. — It should seem then, that either *Elias* himself, or some other great Heroical Spirit matchable to him, is yet to be sent for the accomplishing this great Business in restoring of all Things. In his *Apology*, L. IV. Sect. 6.

Learning, Orthodoxy and Piety, as any of the preceding. But Dr. Gell^c, to the Advantage, I hope, of us unbelieving Protestants, if we should prove such, goes farther in his Belief of an *Elias* to come, than any *Catholicks* of these last Ages; for he believes that *Elias* to come, *will act the Part of old Elias over again; will discover the false Prophetess and Apocalyptical JEZABEL, and will fire BAAL'S Priests out of Israel*; which Opinion is agreeable to what ^d St. *Augustin* writes of the entire Typicalness of old *Elias's* Ministry: And that will be a strange Story and Transaction indeed: But if it should be true, I hope Dr. Gell's *strong* Faith will atone for the *weak* one of his Protestant Brethren, or we had best to keep out of the Reach of his ^e *Two-edged Sword*, that of old made such a Slaughter of us. However, this should admonish us to stand upon our Guard, and be watchful against any Impostor of an *Elias*. Who knows, but what our *Adversary* has written concerning the Tradition of an *Elias*

^c See his *Sermon* on Matth. xvii. v. 11.

^d Contra Faust. Lib. XII. cap. 34.

^e Ensis bis acutus est Sermo divinus bis acutus duobus Testamentis Legis & Evangelii. Tertull. ad Marcion. Lib. 3. c. 14.

to come, may tempt some *Wag* to Personate *Elias*, and if he should put the Banter upon us, this would turn more to our Ridicule among the People, than our Infidelity and Opposition to the true *Elias*, will be a Reproach to us. Let us therefore think of proper Tests to try his Spirit by, that no False-Prophet do beguile us with a lying one. Old *Elias*, we know, challeng'd *Baal's* Priests to a Contest at the Sacrifice of a *Bullock*: And I have heard, that the new *Elias* will challenge us too, and chuse the *Moschos* of the Letter of the Law of *Moses*, which is the Apocalyptical *Beast*, for his *Bullock*. Pray, *Sirs*, let us look about us, that he play us no *Hocus pocus*, or *Legerdemain* Tricks. Let us see well to him, that it be pure, spiritual, immaterial, prophetical and celestial Fire, that he makes to descend upon the Body of it. There is one Thing that *Elias* is to perform in this his Sacrifice, that I think impossible to be done in this Church, that is, as his Sacrifice is to be made for the Ignorance of the *Priests*, as well as of the *People*; so let any one look upon our *Bishops*, and other dignified *Clergy*, especially if they put on their demure Countenances, and judge, whether it be possible for Men to be more learned, more wise,
and

and more knowing of the Nature of God and his Providence, than they seem to be. But why should we Protestant Priests of the Church of *England* trouble our Heads at all about this Matter? If *Elias* should come, it will hardly be to our Clergy. It is the Opinion of ^f *Lapide* and ^g *Suarez*, which is founded on the Authority of the Fathers, that as *Elias* comes for the Reformation of the Clergy, &c. so he'll come to that Part of the Church universal, where *Anti-Christ's* chief Seat is, and where his Ministers are most rampant; which Opinion is our Security; or the Priests of the Church of *Rome*, when they hear of it, will laugh at, and insult over us. But,

Seventhly, As to the Fourth Head of my Discourse, I don't doubt but to puzzle and confound our *Adversary* about his Notion of the *Two Witnesses*. And tho' we *Protestants* can't agree upon another Opinion about them; yet I, like the fa-

^f *Elias* collapsos Cleri & Populi mores est reformaturus, suoque Zelo Apostolico ad avitum Nitorem omnia reparaturus. In *Malach.* cap. 4.

^g Præcipue ea circuibit Loca, in quibus vel *Anti-Christus* ipse, vel potentiores ejus Ministri versabuntur. In *Quest.* 59. *Disp.* 55. *Sett.* 2.

mous *Chillingworth*, that could dispute well against any Thing, and defend nothing, can raise Objections enough against his Notion; and I promise my Readers before-hand to make pleasant Work with his new *Metamorphosis* of *Moses* and *Elias* on Mount *Tabor*. But,

Eighthly, As to my Fifth Head, on which I am to expose our *Adversaries* Blunders, lay open his Falsifications, and disprove his ridiculous and incredible Tales; I long to be at it; and, once thought of postponing my other Heads of Discourse to *this*, for the Pleasure and Satisfaction I shall give the Publick on it. My Fingers itch to be at him on this Score. None can imagine before-hand, how witty and facetious I will be on this Head, nor how ridiculous and contemptible I'll make our *Adversary*. We have render'd him very despicable already, and by the Stories we have told of him, have occasion'd many a Man to give him a *scornful Look*; but the Jests and merry Animadversions, I will pass here on his Ignorance and Blockishness, shall make the very *Boys* of the Streets, for the future, to laugh at him. Old *South* and *Sherlock*, with their comical Remarks on each others *Blunders*, did not give the
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Town half the Diversion, that I will in this Case.

And now I have hinted at the Controversy between those Two Orthodox *Divines* of the Church of *England*, Dr. *Sherlock*, and Dr. *South*, I will tell you, *Sirs*, how impious and profane our *Adversary* is in his Comparisons. He compares this Controversy between these Two eminent *Divines*, to the Disputation between a blind and a deaf Man, when the one is blind of Understanding, and the other dull of Apprehension. The Controversy between the *Athanasians* and *Arians* at this Day, he compares to Two blind Men a boxing each other, who, for want of Eyes in their Understandings and Heads, frequently, if not altogether, miss their Blows: And *Whiston* and *Waterland*, the Two Champions of this Controversy, he says, are like Two *Bulls* contending for the Command of the whole *black Herd*.

*Sic duo conversis inimica in Prælia Tauri,
Frontibus incurrunt.*——

*Stat pecus omne metu mutum, mussantque Juvencæ,
Quis pecori imperitet, quem toto Armenta sequantur.*

And the Controversy between the *Popish* and the *Protestant* Church, is like, he says,

says, to the scolding of Two *Whores*, in which she is always reckon'd most pungent, that gives the worst Language: And because the Protestant Church has used the greatest Multiplicity of Words, and given the most opprobrious Language, therefore (just as it is at *Billingsgate*) the Laugh in *England* has gone on her Side. Is not all this, *Dear Brethren*, very profane, and little less than Blasphemy, so to abuse not only our *Reverend* Controversists in Religion, as if the Bone of Contention between them was hardly worth tugging for; but the Two famous Churches of *Christendom*, that are had in Veneration by *Emperors*, *Kings*, and *Princes*, as well as by an infinite Number of *Bishops* and *Priests* of both of them. Our *Adversary* with his mystical and prophetic *Harp*, had best look to himself, or he may provoke one of these Churches, like a *Fury*, as upon *Orpheus* of old, to fall on him and say,

—*En! hic est nostri Contemptor, & Hastam,
Vatis Apollinei vocalia misit in Ora.*

But, having said this by the By, let me beg of you, *Dear Sirs*, to remember to give me your Advice in the Cases above; and do it with all Expedition, that I may pro-

proceed with the more Courage and Resolution against our *Adversary*, to whom I now turn my Face again, and, Sword in Hand, say,

I think, *Sir*, I have sliced you in many Places of this Discourse; but all this is nothing to the Wounds I will give you in some hereafter. And if you don't soon cry *Peccavi*, and make Satisfaction, not only to the Church of *England*, but to the Christian Church of all *Europe*, (whom you pretend to have taken in Adultery with a *Bull*, that our *Jupiter Olympius* is transform'd into, and which, for these Twelve Hundred and Sixty Years, she has been riding on more and more out of the Way in the Wilderness of Error) you shall find that I'll lay my Blows on you thick and heavy. But before we part, and descend from the Stage of Contention, for this present, let me soberly, without Passion, expostulate with you, in these Two or Three Particulars.

First, Can't you write gravely and seriously, as I do, without *Jests*, *Puns*, and *Banter*. There is nothing more nauseous than *Jests* in Polemical Theology; And it is a Sign in the Man that uses

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them,

them, that he has no true Sense of Religion, or that his *Antagonists*, for Dulness, Ignorance and Stupidity, are proper Objects of Sport and Laughter. Old *Elias*, who was unquestionably a grave, wise, and prudent Man, did Jest and Pun with *Baal's* Priests; and how could he avoid it, in his Disputations with such *Boobies* as worshipp'd *Calves* for *Gods*. I don't think that our grave *Archbishop* of ——— could always have composed his Countenance, if he had been to Discourse with them. Somewhat or other in their Principles and Worship, would have moved him to Smile and break a Jest on them. But was *Elias* to come again to this Church, he would have no Occasion for his bantering and jocular Talent. Though according to Dr. *Gell*, St. *Augustin*, and others, he is to act the whole Part of *Elias* over again, yet I can't think but this pleasant *Scene* of his *Tragi-Comedy* would be omitted. He would meet with nothing in our *Clergy*, that is fit to laugh at, unless they really were such *Paltrons*, *Clodpates*, *Numskulls*, and *Blunderbuffes*, as you, Sir, would make of them. Supposing our *Clergy* do Worship the Apocalyptical *Beast*, and, of the golden Oracles of
 God,

God, have made many gross *Bulls*, *Fatlings*, and *Blunders*, which they adore too for rational and divine Things; yet what's all that for a Jest, in Comparison of the *Calves* that the old *Baalitical* Fools worshipp'd? The most unhappy Circumstance in our Protestant Priesthood of this Church, that is obnoxious to Laughter, is our Tergiversation and Circumvolution with every Wind of Doctrine, as it must be confess'd that we can stand fast to no Point long. But I hope that *Elias*, when he comes to know that we would, if we could, serve *God* as well as *Mammon*, will rather pity than laugh at us for *this*, and look upon it as more our Misfortune than our Fault, that with the Changes of the Times we ~~shift~~ our Principles, and stick close to nothing but our Interests. You, *Sir*, are so uncharitable as to think that there is nothing so absurd, that we would not openly profess for Preferment: Nay, you have said it, that if the Civil Authority would order a *Calf* to be placed in our Churches, where the *Rood* once stood, our Clergy for Promotions and Translations would fall down and worship it: But I thank God, our Governors have more true Religion in them, than

to make the Experiment to humour you ; neither could you suspect so much Wick- edness and Idolatry in the Body of the Clergy, if the History of the Times past did not furnish you with some sorrowful Instances of the Inconstancy of some of our most Pious, most Learned, and most Orthodox Divines of this Church, which puts me to the Blush, and is enough to make a Christian to weep rather than to jest at the Thoughts of it. But,

Secondly, Let me tell you, Sir, you do very foolishly and imprudently to name *Folks Names* in your *Free-Gifts*. Could not you challenge the Body of the *Clergy* without descending to some Particulars ? You was before, by a Friend, admonish'd of this Fault, which has hinder'd the Sale of your Writings, that otherwise would have gone off, like your *Exact Fitness of the Time of Christ's Advent*, more currently for the Sake of the Author, as well as Justness of the Discourse. It is one of your pitiful *Tricks* to bear so hard on Mr. *Hay*, the harmless *Vicar* of St. *Stephen Coleman-Street*, who would no more have defamed you at the Instigation of others, if he thought of being so lampoon'd, than his Countryman would have

have caught the *Tartar*, if he had been apprehensive before-hand of being drubb'd by him. I wonder that Arch-Deacon *Stubbs*, for want of a *Pen*, the proper Weapon for Resentment in a Scholar, does not run his Fist in your Face. But you dare not go near *Merchant-Taylor's* School, for fear the Boys should espouse that Quarrel which *Dr. Smith* their Master, will no farther be engag'd in. And you might as well have spared your Breath, as blow it after the Country Clergy, such as *Mr. Cotterel*, *Liptrot*, and others; who, like the *Fox*, with his Head in a Hole, think none see them; and, so long as your Satyr reaches not the Ears of their poor Neighbours, care not what the Learned say of them.

I know your Design in mentioning of Names, is to provoke some of them to a Publication of the Scandal they have spread of you, that you might have an Opportunity to recriminate, and be more than aveng'd on us; but we are not to be caught in that Snare. Don't you know that, *Secundum usum Sarum*, the bad Character of a great Man, whom we don't love, is not to be publish'd till after his Death, when none hardly can contradict us, or will arise in Defence of him.

him. Was your Head laid in the Dust, without any farther Disturbance of the Church, you should not want for a *Biographer*, who should make you as black as ever we have made old *Noll* of *Sidney*, who subverted the Government of both Church and State in these Kingdoms, and tyrannically usurp'd the Throne of the King of them; as you would overturn the Ministry of the Church universal, and place your self in the *Mosaick* and *Patriarchal* Chair of Ecclesiastical Authority, like an infallible Pope, Judge and Moderator of Controversies. But,

Thirdly, and Lastly, Let me advise you, as an Enemy,

— *Fas est & ab Hoste doceri,*

that you never more reflect on the great Reformers of the Church, such as *Luther*, *Zuinglius*, *Calvin*, *Knox*, and *Peters*. For these are our Protestant *Saints*, and we'll no more suffer them to be abused, than the *Papists* will their *Dominicus*, *Franciscus*, *Loyola*, *Fryar Bacon*, and *Dr. Faustus*. Though the Fathers have given you a large Commission to inveigh against the Ministry of the Letter; yet

yet that shall not be your Protection for any Aspersions to be cast on these our choicest Heroes. Whole Countries have one or other of them in Veneration, and your Abuses of them is an Affront to the Understandings of all their Admirers. Do you think the *Chinese* and *Turks* would like to hear *Mahomet* and *Confutius*, who were their false Prophets, ill spoken of? Much less will the *Protestants* bear with any Reflections on their Saints above, who, are the prime Apostles of the Reformation, and illustrious Founders of numerous and renown'd Sects and Parties. Think on't, that some of the greatest Men of the Church and State in this Kingdom, may profoundly admire one or other of them, and may be provoked to extend a small Reflection to the Length of a greater Crime. I have not consulted with any Lawyers, and so can't tell whether there be any Thing in the Law of the Land, for the Punishment of a Man for his perverse, stubborn, and obstinate Adherence to the Authority of the Fathers; but the first Opportunity I have to talk with *Bishop W——*, that true *Protestant*, I'll ask his Opinion, whether you hereupon may not be as culpable as was, once upon a Time, Mr. *Mist*,
the

the *Journalist*; so wishing your Amend-
ment, and speedy Return to the *Faith* of
a Protestant Priest, which you think no
Man upon Earth can give an Account
of, I subscribe my self, with the Point of
my Sword,

Your avow'd,

London, July 9.

1724.

and profess'd Antagonist,

The COUNTRY CURATE,

F I N I S.

